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ABSTRACT

This guide describes legislation, policy, and funding related to the education of students with special needs in Alberta (Canada) and outlines the province's program delivery requirements and expectations. After an introduction, the first section provides policy guidelines with excerpts from legislation concerning provincial policies and special education funding. The second section covers program delivery requirements and expectations and address school board policy and procedures, screening for early identification of special needs, referral of students with special needs, assessment, student placement, individualized program planning and implementation, program outcomes, transition planning, coordinated services for children, health-related support services, and dispute resolution and appeals. A glossary defines 13 key terms. Four appendices provide: (1) definitions of conditions included in early childhood services and special education; (2) a summary of special education funding in Alberta; (3) an overview of the special education process; and (4) a list of Alberta education references. (Contains 11 references.) (DB)

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GUIDE TO EDUCATION 1997

for

Students with Special Needs

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for
Students
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Special Needs

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For print copies or further information, contact:

Special Education Branch
10th Floor, East Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Ave.
Edmonton, AB
T5K 0L2

Telephone: (403) 422–6326
Fax: (403) 422–2039
Toll free in Alberta: 310–0000

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This document is intended for:

Students	
Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Parents	✓
General Public	
Other	✓

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to release the revised edition of the *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs.*

This *Guide* reflects our belief that all students have the right of equal access to a quality basic education program that meets their diverse needs. The *Guide* outlines the program delivery requirements and expectations related to educating students with special needs. It includes the legislation, policy and funding information which not only responds to the needs of these students but ensures, within these guidelines, opportunities for flexibility and discretion at the local level.

Although the intent of this *Guide* is to provide direction to school authorities, it will also provide all others involved in the decision-making process with useful information. The success of special needs students is a shared responsibility of trustees, principals, teachers, parents, students, community and government.

Gary G. Mar, Q.C.
Minister of Education

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- Members of the Special Education Advisory Committee representing:
  - Alberta Associations for Bright Children
  - Alberta Association for Community Living
  - Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
  - Alberta School Boards Association
  - Alberta Teachers' Association
  - College of Alberta School Superintendents
  - Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Alberta Federation
  - Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta
  - Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
  - University of Alberta, Department of Educational Psychology
- Special Education Council (Alberta Teachers' Association)
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Introduction

Alberta Education's mandate is to ensure that all students in Alberta have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society. To fulfill this mandate, the department develops and administers legislation, regulations and policies related to the governance, funding and delivery of education in the province.

Students with special needs, including those who are gifted and talented, require specialized learning opportunities in order to receive the best education.

The *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs*:

- describes legislation, policy and funding related to educating students with special needs
- outlines Alberta Education's program delivery requirements and expectations
- supports Alberta Education's objective of providing consistent direction, while supporting flexibility and discretion at the local level
- complements the information contained in the current *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 Handbook*.

Although intended primarily to provide direction to school authorities, this document also will be of use to teachers, parents and others interested in the education of students with special needs. It does not prescribe instructional methods or program adaptations.

The *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs* will be revised as required and comments are always welcome.

Legislation, Policy and Funding

Legislation

The *School Act* (1988) mandates that:

> **Every child of school age is entitled to have access in that school year to an education program.** *School Act*, **section 3.**

A student requiring a special education program is entitled to a program appropriate for the student's needs, age and level of educational achievement.

> **School boards are responsible for educating resident students, including those with special needs.** *School Act*, **section 28.**

- School boards must provide programs for all of their resident students.
- School boards are responsible for directing resident students to enroll in and attend a particular school operated by the board.
- School boards may provide a program for a resident student by directing the student to attend a school of another board or authority. Where this is the case the student's board may enter into an agreement with another board or authority to provide an education program for a mutually agreed cost to cover the student's educational program. See *School Act*, section 46(1)(b).
- Where a school board has an appropriate program, but has mutually agreed with parents that their child attend a designated special education private school, the board will contribute to the private school program costs by an amount equal to that provided by the province. Boards can claim applicable funding for these students from Alberta Education. The special education private schools will not claim any funding for these students.

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- A parent of a student can enroll a student in a school of any board if the board agrees there are sufficient resources and facilities available to accommodate the student.

- A parent of a student enrolled in a school shall not request that the student be enrolled in another school during a school year unless the board operating the other school consents.

- Where a school board offers a resident student an appropriate program, and the parent places the student in a program operated by another authority, the board has met its obligation to the student.

School boards are responsible for determining that a student is in need of a special education program. *School Act*, section 29.

A board may determine that a student is, by virtue of the student's behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics, or a combination of those characteristics, a student in need of a special education program. *School Act*, section 29(1).

- School boards will utilize qualified persons to identify students for whom a special education program is necessary.

- School boards will provide access to a special education program for students determined by the board to be in need of a special education program.

- School boards will consult with parents, and where appropriate, the student, before placing the student in a special education program.

- If parents feel that an appropriate program is not being provided by a board for their child, they may initiate an appeal. *School Act*, sections 103, 104.

- A special education program:
  - is based on an individualized program plan (IPP); all students with special needs, including students who are gifted and talented, require IPPs
  - may be provided in a variety of settings, including the regular classroom
  - is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation
  - provides for instruction appropriate to the student's individual learning level.

- Students with special needs may require changes to:
  - the regular curriculum
  - staffing
  - instructional and evaluation strategies
  - materials and resources
  - facilities or equipment.

  In addition, some students may require specialized health care services.

Provincial Policy

The Alberta Education *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* contains provincial policies that describe expectations regarding the education of all students. The following are most relevant for the education of students with special needs:

- *Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs* (Policy 1.6.1)
- *Special Education* (Policy 1.6.2)
- *Services for Students and Children* (Policy 1.8.1)
- *Review by the Minister* (Policy 3.5.1)
- *Special Needs Tribunal* (Policy 3.5.2)
- *Resident Students of the Government* (Policy 3.6.4)
- *Students in Institutions* (Policy 3.6.5).

Special Education Funding

Alberta Education provides funding to school boards, approved Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators and designated private schools to ensure appropriate programs and services are provided to students with special needs.[1]

- Local school boards make decisions regarding the allocation of funds and are held accountable for the provision and allocation of funds to schools.

Basic Instruction funding:

- Provides for the cost of basic educational programs and services including: core programs, complementary programs, and special education programs for students who have mild/moderate disabilities and for students who are gifted and talented.

- Students formally identified as having a special need are required to have a program in accordance with an individualized program plan (IPP). See page GD.13.

[1] For additional information refer to Alberta Education's *Funding for School Authorities Manual* and *Special Education Funding: A Handbook of Procedures and Definitions.*

School boards and schools are expected to use a portion of the basic instruction funding plus any additional funding received for students with special needs to provide appropriate programs and services for all students with special needs. (See Appendix B: Funding of Special Education in Alberta: An Overview, page GD.29).

Severe Disabilities funding:

- is available to school boards and approved private schools for each student with severe disabilities who meets the criteria and who is provided a program in accordance with an individualized program plan (IPP)

- provides for some additional costs of staff, learning resources and some equipment associated with programs for students with severe disabilities.

ECS Program Unit funding:

- can only be obtained by approved operators of an Early Childhood Services (ECS) program

- enables ECS operators to provide individual programs that meet the educational requirements of children with severe disabilities

- is available for children with severe disabilities, who on September 1 are at least two years, six months, but younger than six years old

- is available for a maximum of three years and is designed to provide continuous support up to Grade 1.

There are categories of special needs that are generally accepted and used for administrative and funding purposes. Definitions are included in Appendix A, page GD.21.

Program Delivery Requirements and Expectations

Alberta Education is responsible for establishing a basis for the provision of equitable access to appropriate and effective education programs for all Alberta students, including those with special needs. The department has established requirements and expectations for school authorities in the following areas:

- school board policy and procedures
- screening for early identification of special needs
- referral of students with special needs
- assessment
- student placement
- individualized program planning and implementation
- program outcomes
- transition planning
- co-ordinated services for children
- health-related support services
- dispute resolution and appeals.

School Board Policy and Procedures

Requirement

Written policies and procedures are developed, kept current and implemented consistent with provincial policies and procedures.

School authorities will:

- develop, keep current and implement written policies and procedures regarding educating students with special needs, including students identified as gifted and talented

- develop written policies and procedures that:
  - are consistent with provincial policies and guidelines
  - describe all program and service options available for students with special needs
  - describe the roles of board and school personnel; e.g., administrators, teachers, professional support staff, parents and community agencies that support students with special needs
  - are monitored and updated regularly
  - are available to educators, parents and, where appropriate, students

- ensure that written policies and procedures provide for:
  - screening for early identification of special needs
  - referral of students with special needs
  - assessment
  - student placement
  - individualized program planning and implementation
  - transition planning
  - co-ordinated services for children
  - heath-related support services
  - dispute resolution and appeal processes
  - storage of and access to student records[2]

- ensure the best educational interests of the student are the paramount considerations in the exercise of any authority.[3]

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[2] For more information, refer to the *Student Record Regulation* (Alberta Regulation 213/89, amended A.R. 175/93).

[3] *School Act*, 1988 preamble page 9.

Screening for Early Identification of Special Needs

Requirement
Students are screened for early identification of special needs.[4]

School authorities will:

- provide information to school staff and parents that describes characteristics that may be used to help identify special needs in the following areas:
  - physical
  - behavioural
  - communicational
  - cognitive
  - academic
  - social/adaptive
  - hearing
  - vision

- obtain from parents, information relevant to their child's education; e.g., hearing, speech, vision, developmental progress, medical information. This information will be obtained when the child enters the educational program; e.g., ECS, Grade 1, and will be kept updated.

[4] For additional information, refer to Alberta Education documents — *Teacher Alert System (TAS): A Guide for Teacher-Managed Assessment of Students Who are "At Risk" of School Failure* (1991); *Teacher Intervention Practices (TIPS): A Companion Document to the Teacher Alert System* (1992).

Referral of Students with Special Needs

Requirement

Students identified as having special needs are referred for further consultation and/or assessment.

School authorities will:

- have written procedures to identify students requiring referral to specialists for assessment
- provide parents, teachers and support staff with necessary information regarding the sequence of steps to be taken when a referral is made
- involve parents and, where appropriate, students in decisions related to the referral
- obtain parents' informed, written consent for referral
- make referrals on the basis of a variety of indicators, including the results of:
  - screening procedures
  - teacher assessment and observation
  - parent information, including their external assessments
- provide, where required, formal assessment and/or consultation within four weeks of the date of referral for program planning purposes[5]
- provide a student support team involving teachers, parents and appropriate others to identify interim instructional strategies and implement individualized program plans.

[5] For additional information refer to *Standards for Psycho-educational Assessment* (1994).

Assessment

Requirement

Assessments are conducted to determine suitable educational goals, instructional strategies and services in support of the student's program.[6]

School authorities will:

- use a variety of appropriate assessment strategies which are non-discriminatory and multi-dimensional to assess students
- use results of assessments provided by specialists, school staff and/or parents to plan programs
- require that qualified individuals conduct assessments and interpret to parents, teachers and others involved with the student's program, the assessment results and any program planning recommendations
- require that assessment results be used to develop individualized program plans
- require that when psycho-educational assessments are necessary, they are conducted and results are interpreted, recorded and used according to Alberta Education's expectations outlined in *Standards for Psycho-educational Assessment* (1994)
- require that where students require special provisions for testing, these are available for school-based and provincial assessments.

[6] For additional information, refer to the Alberta Education documents — *Promising Assessment Models and Practices* (1994); *Understanding Students' Needs: A Guide for Developing and Implementing Assessment Procedures for Students Encountering Educational Challenges* (1993).

Student Placement

Requirement

Students are placed in programs where their needs can best be met.

School authorities will:

- establish a process for determining the most appropriate program placement for a student with special needs
- in consultation with parents, determine the most appropriate placement in a manner consistent with *Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs* (Policy 1.6.1)
- ensure placement decisions are based on appropriate and well-documented student assessments
- provide teachers of students with special needs with adequate learning resources and other classroom support, as well as appropriate inservice training and access to professional development opportunities
- provide meaningful parental consultation and involvement in decisions that affect their children.

Individualized Program Planning and Implementation

Requirement

An individualized program plan (IPP) is developed and implemented for each student identified as having special needs.

School authorities will:

- require that school administrators ensure IPPs are prepared, implemented and evaluated
- require that school administrators identify a key professional teacher whose primary responsibility is the co-ordination and monitoring of students' IPPs; parents and, where appropriate, students and other professionals, will be consulted in the development of IPPs
- include the following essential information in an IPP:[7]
  - assessed level of educational performance
  - strengths and areas of need
  - long-term goals and short-term objectives
  - assessment procedures for short-term objectives
  - special education and related services to be provided
  - review dates, results and recommendations
  - relevant medical information
  - required classroom accommodations; e.g., any changes to instructional strategies, assessment procedures, materials, resources, facilities or equipment
  - transition plans
- include in the IPP the provision of health-related support services, if required
- implement programs in accordance with the IPP
- review the IPP formally with parents, and where appropriate, students, on an ongoing basis throughout the year
- use results of IPP reviews to assess, and where necessary, revise student programs and placement.

[7] For further information, refer to *Individualized Program Plans*, Book 3 of the *Programming for Students with Special Needs* series.

Program Outcomes

Requirement
Program outcomes are identified in the student's individualized program plan (IPP).

School authorities will:

- develop and implement education plans that meet provincial requirements and local needs consistent with *School Authority Accountability* (Policy 2.1.1)
- use planning, assessing, monitoring and reporting to further improve the quality of education provided to students with special needs
- report expenditures for students with severe disabilities on the Audited Financial Statements and Budget Report Forms
- be consistent with the *Three-year Plan for Education*[8] by:
  - focusing on what students need to learn
  - ensuring high standards are set, communicated and achieved
  - ensuring students acquire the education they need to prepare for work, further study and citizenship
  - using performance measure results to identify areas for improvement.

[8] *Meeting the Challenge IV, the Government of Alberta's Three-Year Plan for Education 1997/1998–1999/2000.*

Transition Planning

Requirement

Transitions are planned for students with special needs for school entry, between levels of schooling and upon school completion.[9]

School authorities will:

- co-ordinate the development of a transition plan consistent with the student's individualized program plan
- establish and initiate a process that involves the student, family, other professionals and community agencies, as appropriate, in the transition plan
- establish procedures to advise:
  - parents of anticipated transition from one level of schooling to another; e.g., ECS – elementary – junior high – senior high
  - parents of anticipated termination of the provision of special education services
  - parents and appropriate community agencies, one year in advance, of anticipated completion of a special education program; e.g., school to post-secondary, community or work situations
- inform parents of alternatives available to the student upon completion of the school program.

[9] For additional information, refer to Alberta Education documents — *Individualized Program Plans* (1995); *Partners During Changing Times: An Information Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (1996); *Transition Planning for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Families, Teachers and Counsellors* (1992).

Co-ordinated Services for Children

Requirement
Children and students have access to the support services they require.

School authorities will:

- develop, keep current and implement written local policy and procedures for working with other members of the community to design and deliver services for children and students with special needs consistent with *Services for Students and Children* (Policy 1.8.1)
- include plans and strategies for the delivery of co-ordinated services for children and students in their three-year education plans and results reports
- take an active role to initiate or participate in working together with other members of the community to ensure children and students with special needs have access to the services they require.

Health-related Support Services

Requirement
Written procedures are available regarding the provision of health-related support services for students with special needs.

In order for school board staff to assist in the ongoing provision of health-related support services, school authorities will:

- obtain written authorization from parents and qualified health professionals to provide health-related support services to students
- incorporate in a student's IPP, procedures for providing health-related support services
- ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training by health professionals or other trained individuals, including parents, in administering health-related support services
- have written procedures regarding storing and/or administering medications that include:
  - each particular medication administered
  - directions for use; e.g., dosage, how and when to be taken
  - possible side effects, if any
  - storage instructions and record-keeping log
  - doctor's name and telephone number.

In order for school board staff to be able to respond to emergency situations involving health-related support services school authorities will:

- have written procedures for staff to use related to a student's immediate medical needs
- keep in force polices of insurance for any personal injury, loss or liability consistent with *School Act*, section 44 and Alberta Regulation 78/89 (Insurance Regulation)

Dispute Resolution and Appeals

Requirement
Processes for equitable and fair dispute resolution and appeals are developed and available.

School authorities will:

- make every effort at the local level to resolve concerns:
  - collaboratively with parents to meet the needs of each student
  - through mediation and/or other means
- establish written procedures to hear local appeals from parents regarding decisions that significantly affect the education or placement of students with special needs, *School Act*, section 103
- inform and provide parents with written copies of procedures to deal with disputes at the local level
- advise parents of their right to:
  - formally appeal administrative decisions affecting the education of their children, *School Act*, section 103
  - have the Minister of Education review the board's decision, if they are not satisfied with the decision of the board, *School Act*, section 104.[10]

[10] For more information, refer to Alberta Education documents — *Review by the Minister* (Policy 3.5.1); *Partners During Changing Times: An Information Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (1996).

Glossary

Accountability	The obligation to answer for the execution of one's assigned responsibilities (report the results).
Adequate Program	Decisions regarding the adequacy of a particular program can only be made on an individual basis. The term adequate by definition means sufficient for a given purpose. The intended purpose of the program must be considered and a judgment made regarding the extent to which the goals of the program have been achieved.
Appropriate Program	A program based on the results of ongoing assessment and evaluation, and which includes an individualized program plan (IPP) with specific goals, objectives and recommendations for educational services that meet the student's needs. An appropriate program requires ongoing assessment of the congruency between the program and services provided, and the identified needs of the student.
Assessment	The ongoing process of collecting information about the student. Includes psycho-educational assessment, which is formal testing of a student across a variety of domains relevant to performance; e.g., intellectual, personality/emotional, behavioural with a view to developing an appropriate program. Information from the assessment is used to make decisions about program placement, program planning, and student and program evaluation.
Collaboration	A process in which people work together to plan programs, select strategies and implement the programs.
Consultation	A process in which parents, school staff and appropriate others share information and parents are involved in decision making.
Co-ordination	Co-ordination describes joint actions by agencies and organizations at local, regional and/or provincial levels that may involve: sharing information, identifying needs, planning and delivering services, allocating resources, and evaluating outcomes. The existing mandates, structures, goals, roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies and organizations are typically maintained.

Evaluation	A judgment made on the basis of assessment information.
Individualized Program Plan (IPP)	A written plan prepared for each student with special needs who requires modifications to the regular school program. The IPP specifies goals and objectives, describes program modifications and outlines the special education services to be provided to meet the identified special needs.
Informed Consent	Indicates that parents understand and have agreed to the action to be taken.
Parent	Parent or legal guardian of a child.
Referral	The process of directing a student to the appropriate school-based, school system-based or community-based specialist for consultation and/or assessment.
School Authorities	School jurisdictions, private schools and private ECS operators. Includes all personnel at the district and school levels.

Appendix A

Early Childhood Services (ECS) to Grade 12 Special Education

The following definitions are provided to assist school jurisdictions, private schools and Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators in determining appropriate coding for the Student Information System (SIS) and eligibility for Alberta Education funding.

GIFTED AND TALENTED (SIS CODE 80)

The student who is gifted and talented is one who by virtue of outstanding ability is capable of exceptional performance. This is a student who requires differentiated provisions and/or programs beyond the regular school program to realize his or her contribution to self and society.

A student capable of exceptional performance is one who demonstrates achievement and/or potential ability in one of several areas:

General Intellectual Ability

The student possessing general intellectual ability is consistently superior to the other students in the school, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Usually, this is the student who has a large storehouse of information about a wide variety of topics. The ability to abstract, generalize and utilize high level thinking skills is common in this type of student.

Specific Academic Aptitude

The student possessing a specific academic aptitude is the student who in a specific subject area, is consistently superior to the aptitudes of the other students in the school to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who has an inordinate strength in a specific area, such as mathematical reasoning.

Creative or Productive Thinking

The student who thinks creatively or productively is one who consistently engages in divergent thinking that results in unconventional responses to conventional tasks, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination.

Leadership Ability

The student possessing leadership ability is one who not only assumes leadership roles, but is also accepted by others as a leader, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who can be counted upon to carry out responsibilities and adapts readily to new situations.

Visual and Performing Arts

The student possessing visual and performing arts ability is one who consistently creates outstanding aesthetic productions in graphic areas, sculpture, music, drama or dance, to the extent that this student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

Psychomotor Ability

The student possessing psychomotor ability is one who consistently displays mechanical skills or athletic ability so superior to that of other students in the school that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student with good control of body movement and excellent eye-hand co-ordination.

MILD/MODERATE DISABLING CONDITIONS

Mild Mental Disability (SIS Code 51)

The student with a mild mental disability is usually delayed in most academic subjects and social behaviors as compared to his or her same-age peers.

Any student designated as having a mild mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of 50 to 75 ± 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test, have an adaptive behaviour score equivalent to the mildly delayed level on an adaptive behaviour scale; e.g., American Association on Mental Deficiency Adaptive Behavior Scale, Progress Assessment Chart, Vineland, and exhibit developmental delays in social behaviours.

Moderate Mental Disability (SIS Code 52)

The student with a moderate mental disability requires significant modification to basic curriculum, but is able to profit from instruction in living/vocational skills and may acquire functional literacy and numeracy skills.

Any student who is designated as having a moderate mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of approximately 30 to 50 ± 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test and have an adaptive behaviour score equivalent to the moderately delayed level on an adaptive behaviour scale; e.g., American Association on Mental Deficiency Adaptive Behavior Scale, Progress Assessment Chart, Vineland.

Emotional/Behavioural Disability (SIS Code 53)

The student with a mild to moderate emotional/behavioural disability exhibits chronic and pervasive behaviours that are so maladaptive that they interfere with the learning and safety of the student and other students.

Typically, behaviour disabilities are characterized by a number of observable maladaptive behaviours:

a) an inability to establish or maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or adults
b) a general mood of unhappiness or depression
c) inappropriate behaviour or feelings under ordinary conditions

d) continued difficulty in coping with the learning situation in spite of remedial intervention
e) physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems
f) difficulties in accepting the realities of personal responsibility and accountability
g) physical violence toward other persons and/or physical destructiveness toward the environment.

Learning Disability
(SIS Code 54)

The student with a learning disability usually has average or above average intelligence but has specific learning disabilities which interfere with normal academic learning.

Learning disabilities* is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, co-ordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation.

Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual, including those with potentially average, or above average intelligence.

Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.

Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, events in the pre- to perinatal period, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment.

* This is the official definition adopted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) on October 18, 1981. Reprinted with permission.

Hearing Disability
(SIS Code 55)

The student with a mild to moderate hearing disability is one whose hearing condition affects speech and language development and interferes with the ability to learn. A student with a mild (26 to 40 decibels) to moderate (41 to70 decibels) hearing disability will have an average hearing loss of 26 to 70 decibels unaided in the better ear over the normal range of speech. The normal range of speech is 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz or 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, 4000 Hz.

Visual Disability
(SIS Code 56)

The student with a mild to moderate visual disability is one whose vision is so limited that it interferes with the student's ability to learn or the student requires modification of the learning environment to be able to learn. A student who is designated as having limited vision should have a visual acuity of less than 20/70 (6/21 metric) in the better eye after correction and/or a reduced field of vision.

Communication Disability
(SIS Code 57)

The student with a communication disability has significant difficulty communicating with peers and adults because of a disability in expressive and/or receptive language, and/or disabilities in speech including articulation, voice and fluency.

Physical or Medical Disability
(SIS Code 58)

The student with a mild to moderate physical or medical disability is one whose physical, neurological or medical condition interferes with the ability to learn, or who requires modification of the learning environment to be able to learn. The existence of a physical disability or medical condition, in and of itself, is not sufficient for the student to be designated in this category; the condition must impact upon the student's schooling.

Multiple Disability
(SIS Code 59)

The student with a multiple disability has two or more non-associated mild to moderate disabilities which have a significant impact upon his or her ability to learn. Some disabling conditions are closely associated so would not be designated under this category. For example, students with hearing disabilities frequently have communication disabilities, and students with mental disabilities almost always have both academic and communication disabilities.

SEVERE DISABLING CONDITIONS

Severe Mental Disability (SIS Code 41)

The student with a severe mental disability has severe delays in all or most areas of development. A student in this category frequently has other disabilities including physical, sensory, medical and behavioural. This student requires constant assistance and/or supervision in all areas of functioning including daily living skills, and may require assistive technology.

Any student who is designated as having a severe mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of approximately 30 ± 5 or less as measured on an individual intelligence test and have an adaptive behaviour score equivalent to the severe to profound level on an adaptive behaviour scale; e.g., American Association on Mental Deficiency Adaptive Behavior Scale, Progress Assessment Chart, Vineland.

Note: For an ECS child this may mean little if any functional adaptive behaviour and/or an inability to initiate meaningful play.

Severe Emotional/ Behavioral Disability (SIS Code 42)

The student with a severe emotional/behavioural disability displays chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours which require close and constant adult supervision, and other intensive support services in a highly structured environment in order to function in an educational setting. The behaviours significantly interfere with both the learning and safety of the student and other students.

Students with the following characteristics usually qualify in this category:

- dangerously aggressive, destructive, violent and impulsive behaviours, including severe conduct disorders
- autism or other severe pervasive developmental disorders
- self-stimulation, self-abuse, perseveration, echolalia and/or aphasic behaviour
- psychosis including schizophrenia, manic depression or obsessive compulsive disorders.

A clinical diagnosis by a chartered psychologist or psychiatrist is required, in addition to extensive documentation of the nature, frequency and severity of the disorder by school authorities. The effects of the disability on the student's functioning in an educational setting should be described. An ongoing treatment plan should be available and efforts should be made to ensure that the student has access to appropriate mental health and therapeutic services.

A clinical diagnosis of a behaviour disability is required but not sufficient to qualify under this category. Some diagnoses are not of sufficient severity to qualify including: attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), fetal alcohol effect (FAE) and oppositional defiant disorder (except for the most extreme and pervasive instances).

Severe Multiple Disability (SIS Code 43)

The student who has a combination of two or more non-associated, major (moderate to severe) disabling conditions which result in functioning as low or lower than that associated with a severe primary disability, and who requires special programs, resources and/or therapeutic services.

A student with a severe mental disability and another associated disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe mental disability.

Severe Physical or Medical Disability (SIS Code 44)

The student with a physical or medical disability is one whose physical, medical or neurological disability is so severe that he or she requires extensive personal assistance and modifications to the learning environment in order to benefit from schooling. A student with a severe mental disability and physical or medical disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe mental disability.

A medical diagnosis of a physical, medical or neurological disability is required but not necessarily sufficient to qualify under this category. Some physical or medical disabilities have little or no impact upon the student's ability to function in the school environment.

Deafness
(SIS Code 45)

The student with a severe to profound hearing loss is one whose hearing loss interferes with the use of oral language as the primary form of communication. A student who is designated as having a severe to profound hearing disability has an average hearing loss of at least 71 decibels or more unaided in the better ear over the normal range of speech. The normal range of speech is 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz or 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, 4000 Hz.

Blindness
(SIS Code 46)

The student with a severe visual disability is one whose corrected vision is so limited that it is inadequate for most or all instructional situations, and information must be presented through other means. For designation under this category, students would be eligible for registration with CNIB.

Visual acuity is 20/200 (6/60 metric) or less in the better eye with correction, or a field of vision limited to an angle of 20 degrees or less in both eyes.

Severe Communication Disability —
For ECS children only
(SIS Code 47)

The child with a severe communication disability has severe difficulty communicating with peers and adults because of a severe disability in expressive and/or receptive language. This may include little, if any, expressive or receptive communication skills; i.e., less than or equal to the first percentile.

Appendix B

Funding of Special Education in Alberta: an Overview

Funding is available to school jurisdictions, Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators and funded private schools. The following chart displays the types of special education funding available.

Special Education Funding for 1997–98

Funding	Rate
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES (ECS)	
Basic Instruction	$1,182 per child
Mildly or Moderately Disabled	$1,360 per child
Program Unit Funding (Severely Disabled)	up to $19,000/unit
Transportation – Special Needs	$8.65 per round trip
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	
Instruction Block	
Basic Instruction	$3,686 x 7/12 (September–March) per FTE student $3,716 x 5/12 (April–August) per FTE student
Severe Disabilities	$8,910 per eligible funded student
Institutional Funding	per approved budget
Regional Assessment Services	per approved contract
Support Block	
Transportation	
Special (for Students with Disabilities)	$1,710 per funded student *
Weekend	$2,782 per funded student
Boarding	$2,500 per funded student
PRIVATE SCHOOLS	
Basic Instruction	$1,815 x 7/12 per funded student $1,830 x 5/12 per funded student
Severe Disabilities (All Private Schools)	$8,910 per funded eligible student
Resident Students of the Government **	Net cost of the education program

* Funded students are defined in the *Funding for School Authorities Manual*.

** The Director of the Special Education Branch must approve the placement of resident students of the Government before funding is received.

Appendix C

Overview of Process

LEGISLATION, POLICY AND FUNDING

LEGISLATION

School Act

❑ Section 3 ❑Section 28 ❑ Section 29 ❑ Section 103 ❑ Section 104

POLICY

- ❑ *Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs* (Policy 1.6.1)
- ❑ *Special Education* (Policy 1.6.2)
- ❑ *Services for Students and Children* (Policy 1.8.1)
- ❑ *Review by the Minister* (Policy 3.5.1)
- ❑ *Special Needs Tribunal* (Policy 3.5.2)
- ❑ *Resident Students of the Government* (Policy 3.6.4)
- ❑ *Students in Institutions* (Policy 3.6.5)

FUNDING

- ❑ Basic Instruction Funding (Mild/Moderate, Gifted and Talented)
- ❑ Severe Disabilities Funding
- ❑ ECS Program Unit Funding

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PROGRAM DELIVERY

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY AND PROCEDURES

School authorities will develop written policies and procedures consistent with provincial legislation, policy and funding that will:

- ❑ reflect local needs
- ❑ describe available program and service options
- ❑ describe roles of board and school personnel, parents and community agencies
- ❑ be monitored and updated on regular basis
- ❑ be available to educators, parents and, where appropriate, students.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
SCREENING FOR EARLY IDENTIFICATION

School authorities will:

- ❑ provide information to school staff and parents that describe characteristics useful in identifying special needs in the following areas: physical, behavioural, communicational, cognitive, academic, social/adaptive, hearing, vision
- ❑ obtain from parents, information relevant to their child's education.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
REFERRAL OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

School authorities will:

- ❑ have written referral procedures in place
- ❑ involve parents and, where appropriate, students in the referral process
- ❑ obtain parents' informed, written consent for referral
- ❑ provide, where required, formal assessment and/or consultation within four weeks of date of referral
- ❑ provide a student support team to identify interim instructional strategies and implement IPPs.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
ASSESSMENT

School authorities will:

- ❑ use a variety of assessment strategies to assess performance
- ❑ require that qualified individuals conduct assessments
- ❑ require that assessment results be used to develop IPPs
- ❑ follow Alberta Education procedures for students requiring psycho-educational assessments
- ❑ ensure that special provisions for testing are available, as required.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
STUDENT PLACEMENT

School authorities will:

- ❑ establish a process for determining the most appropriate program placement
- ❑ consult with parents to determine the most appropriate placement
- ❑ ensure program placement decisions are based on appropriate assessments
- ❑ provide teachers with adequate learning resources and classroom support.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY

INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

School authorities will:

- ❒ require that school administrators ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of individualized program plans (IPPs)
- ❒ identify key personnel responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of IPPs
- ❒ involve parents and, where appropriate, students and other professionals in development of IPPs
- ❒ include the following essential information in IPPs:
  - assessed level of educational performance
  - strengths and needs
  - long-term goals
  - short-term objectives
  - assessment procedures for short-term objectives
  - special education and related services to be provided
  - review dates, results and recommendations
  - relevant medical information
  - required classroom accommodations
  - transition plans
  - health-related support services, if required
- ❒ review IPPs formally with parents and, where appropriate, students
- ❒ use results of IPP reviews to assess and, where necessary, revise student programs and placements.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

School authorities will:

- ❑ develop and implement education plans that meet provincial requirements and local needs
- ❑ use planning, assessing, monitoring and reporting to further improve the quality of education
- ❑ focus education on what students need to learn
- ❑ ensure high standards are set, communicated and achieved
- ❑ use performance measure results to identify areas for improvement.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
TRANSITION PLANNING

School authorities will:

- ❑ co-ordinate the development of transition plans consistent with students' IPPs
- ❑ establish and initiate a process that involves students, families and community agencies
- ❑ establish procedures for transition between levels of schooling; e.g., ECS – elementary – junior high – senior high
- ❑ advise parents of anticipated transitions
- ❑ advise parents of alternatives available to the student upon completion of school program.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
CO-ORDINATED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

School authorities will:

- ❑ develop, keep current and implement written local policy and procedures
- ❑ include plans and strategies for the delivery of co-ordinated services for children and students in their three-year education plans and results reports
- ❑ take an active role to initiate or participate in working together with other members of the community.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
HEALTH-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

School authorities will:

- ❑ obtain written authorization from parents and qualified health professionals to provide health-related support services
- ❑ incorporate in students' IPPs, procedures for providing these services
- ❑ ensure staff are provided with appropriate training
- ❑ have written procedures regarding storing and/or administering medications
- ❑ have written procedures for staff to use related to a student's immediate medical needs
- ❑ keep in force policies of insurance for any personal injury, loss or liability.

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PROGRAM DELIVERY
DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND APPEALS

School authorities will:

- ❑ make every effort at the local level to resolve concerns
- ❑ establish written procedures to hear local appeals
- ❑ inform and provide parents with written copies of appeal procedures
- ❑ advise parents of their rights with respect to the appeal process, including their right to have the Minister of Education review the board's decision.

Appendix D

Alberta Education References

ECS Program Unit Funding: A Handbook for ECS Operators
Available free of charge from the Special Education Branch. Telephone (403) 422–6326.

Funding for School Authorities Manual
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Partners During Changing Times: An Information Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Needs. Available free of charge from the Special Education Branch. Telephone (403) 422–6326.

Programming for Students with Special Needs series
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Book 1: *Teaching for Student Differences*
Book 2: *Essential and Supportive Skills for Students with Developmental Disabilities*
Book 3: *Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)*
Book 4: *Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*
Book 5: *Teaching Students with Visual Impairments*
Book 6: *Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities*

Promising Assessment Models and Practices
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Special Education Funding: A Handbook of Procedures and Definitions
Available free of charge from the Special Education Branch. Telephone (403) 422–6326.

Standards for Psycho-educational Assessment
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Teacher Alert System: A Guide for Teacher Managed Assessment of Students who are "At risk" of School Failure
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Teacher Intervention Practices (TIPS): A Companion Document to the Teacher Alert System
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.

Transition Planning for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Families, Teachers and Counsellor. Available free of charge from the Special Education Branch. Telephone (403) 422–6326.

Understanding Students' Needs: A Guide for Developing and Implementing Assessment Procedures for Students Encountering Educational Challenges
Order from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Telephone (403) 427–5775.